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# REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS & GRADES

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The Dorchester County Board of Education recognizes that one of the greatest concerns of teachers, parents, and students is determining and reporting student performance. The fundamental purpose of any method of determining and reporting student performance from Kindergarten through grade 12 is to establish a flow of communication among the school, the student, and the home so that students may achieve at their highest potential. It should, therefore, affect each person involved in a positive, constructive, consistent, and concise manner.

## **Elementary Student Progress Reporting**

At the elementary level, The Dorchester County Board of Education recognizes that the purpose of a progress report is to provide parents, teachers, and students with more accurate information about students' progress towards meeting specific content standards. By monitoring the standards listed on the progress report, parents and teachers will know if students are mastering the skills needed at each grade level. As a result, parents will have access to additional information in regards to what their child should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level. The Standards-Based Progress Report highlights the most important content and skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level.

Dorchester County Public Schools believes that the progress report will provide parents with the information on how their child is progressing on the critical content of grade level standards, knowledge, and skills; it will also focus on behaviors that support learning. The progress report will be a tool which facilitates communication between home and school. The DCPS Parent Guide to Elementary Standards Based Reporting is available online at [www.dcps.k12.md.us](http://www.dcps.k12.md.us) as well as at your child's school.

The comprehensive reporting system is an on-going conversation between teachers, students, and their families. The information shared reflects a summary of the student's performance as compared to grade-level expectations. Communication between home and school is essential to support the progress that students make toward demonstrating the proficiency with the curriculum taught in Dorchester County Public Schools.

Our new standards-based progress report is distributed three times a year rather than four times a year because it requires more time for assessment and documentation. Research indicates trimester reporting periods are more developmentally appropriate for

elementary school students as they provide more time for students to learn and demonstrate proficiency, provide more time for teachers and parents to identify and correct areas of concern during the reporting period, and provide more flexibility for teachers to pace curriculum and ensure student mastery of instruction. The dates for progress reports are established by the Superintendent of Schools. In the 2017-2018 school year these dates are:

December 8, 2017

March 16, 2018

June 14, 2018

Mid-Trimester Progress Reports are required for all students. Mid-Trimester Progress Reports are distributed halfway through the trimester marking period. In the 2017-2018 school year the dates are:

October 16, 2017

January 25, 2018

April 24, 2018

### **Proficiency levels on the Prekindergarten through Grade 5 Standards Based Progress Report**

The proficiency level represents a student's progress in all content areas, including Unified Arts. There are four categories, Exceeds (E), Meets (M), Approaching (A), Needs improvement (N).

Earning an "E" means a student demonstrates academically superior skills in a specific area; extends key concepts processes and skills; and consistently works beyond the stated grade-level standards. An "E" is difficult to obtain and indicates unusually high achievement.

Earning a "M" means the student has proficient understanding in a specific area; consistently grasps and applies key concepts, processes, and skills independently; and successfully meets stated grade-level standards. We want all of our students to reach an "M" by the end of their grade level. A student receiving an "M" is right on track with our high academic expectations. An "M" is something to be celebrated.

Earning an "A" means the student is progressing towards the standard; however, the student performance has not yet reached the level of consistent application. The student requires modeling, reinforcement, or support from time to time.

Earning an "N" means the student is not grasping key concepts, processes, and essential skills of stated grade-level standards. This is an area of concern that requires support and interventions may be needed to learn and stay on track with district expectations.

If the area is shaded, that means the standard has not been assessed during this trimester.

Please keep in mind that students will receive an “M” when they have successfully met the grade-level standard. Different students progress at different rates, so standards may be met in varying amounts of time, with varying amounts of teacher support. The goal is for all students to achieve an “M” in the stated grade-level standards by the end of the school year.

Learner Behaviors are the skills related to the characteristics of a successful student. Learner Behaviors are observed, not assessed, by the teacher. These behaviors impact learning and are reflective of the student's current behaviors and work habits within the classroom (i.e. maintain attention to task, respect people and property).

### **Secondary Student Progress Reporting & Grades**

Secondary report cards will be issued four times a year on the dates established by the Superintendent of Schools. In the 2017- 2018 school year these dates are:

November 15, 2017

February 1, 2018

April 10, 2018

June 14, 2018

Parent/Teacher Conference Days will be held:

November 15, 2017

March 14, 2018

Parents/Guardians of students in grades 6 through 12 must be given an Interim/Student Progress Report if the student is failing, receiving a D, or dropping more than two letter grades. Any student receiving a C or better may receive an Interim Report based on teacher discretion. Interim Reports will be sent on:

October 3, 2017

December 11, 2017

February 26, 2018

May 2, 2018

1. Instruction begins the very first day of school. Class expectations and course requirements will be specifically clarified at the beginning of the year for students and parents/guardians. Each classroom teacher will provide and review with each class a written

syllabus including the units, curriculum aligned activities and factors for grading to be considered in that course.

2. Formative assessments, or assessments that are embedded as a part of daily instruction, account for 30% of a student's grade. Examples of formative assessments may include homework, class work, group work, exploratory labs, exit tickets, and draft essays. Summative assessments account for 70% of a student's grade. A summative assessment occurs after instruction has been completed on a given topic, standard, or unit. Summative assessments are used to determine what students know, understand and are able to do at one point in time. Examples of summative assessments include unit tests, announced quizzes, major projects, essays, tests, lab projects and final exams. Each factor and its weight shall be determined by the teacher and communication in writing to the student in the course syllabus. Grades are determined by student performance on formative and summative assessments.

3. When students are absent, they are expected to make up work per the county attendance policy.

4. Any student scoring below 70% on a summative assessment shall be permitted to take a retest before the next summative assessment unless otherwise approved by the teacher. The teacher shall prescribe a reasonable amount of instructional support and review that must be completed prior to the student being able to retest: attend a review session, complete a review assignment, etc. Retesting shall be conducted at a time mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the student, either in the regular class period, before or after school, or at any other reasonable time. The retest shall cover the same instructional objectives as the original summative assessment and shall be similar in difficulty level, but the structure of the test and question format may vary at the teacher's discretion. No retests will be given for final/end-of-year examinations. If the student scores below 70%, then the higher of the two (original and retake) will be the grade recorded for that assessment. If the student scores 70% or above, then a 70% will be recorded for the assessment.

5. Credit Recovery Procedure:

- Any student who receives a final grade below 60% in Government and scores "proficient or advanced" on the High School Assessment for Government will receive 60% and one credit as the final grade for the course (unless the student elects to retake the assessed course over the summer or during the following school year).
- Any student who receives a final grade below 60% in Algebra 1 or ELA 10 and receives "met or exceeded expectations" on the PARCC assessment will receive 60% and one credit as the final grade for the course (unless the student elects to retake the assessed course over the summer or during the following school year).

6. Beginning at the middle school level, grade point averages (GPAs) and subsequent related ranking will be determined by the letter grades on a 4.0 scale. The weighted GPA will be used for Honor Society qualifications. For all students both the weighted and unweighted GPA will be available for college transcripts and other GPA requests.

7. Middle school students who take high school courses in middle school will receive high school credit for passing these courses, and the course will appear on transcripts.

8. All grades that affect a student's formative or summative assessment, term, semester, or final grade are available to the student and parent/guardian in PowerSchool. Students are encouraged to keep a record of their own grades. Parent access codes for PowerSchool may be found on transcripts and report cards, or from the school counseling office.

9. Mathematics: Dorchester County Public Schools has transitioned to the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards for Mathematics for elementary and middle school mathematics as well as Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry.

10. Language Arts: English/Language Arts courses are based on the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards. Classwork and teacher expectations will reflect a high degree of rigor and increased demands in the areas of writing as well as reading complex literary and nonfiction texts. Assessments will be used to monitor student progress toward mastery of skills in reading, writing, language and speaking and listening.

11. Science: Science courses are based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Formative measures, benchmark tests, and state standardized tests in grades 5, 8, and high school, are based upon these standards.

12. Social Studies: Social Studies courses are based on the Maryland Social Studies Content Standards in elementary and middle school, and the Social Studies State Standards in U.S. History, World History, and Government in high school. Formative assessments and benchmark tests are based on this curriculum and the state HSA for Government. The College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Inquiry in Social Studies State Standards is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. C3 upgrades social studies standards to meet the practical goal of preparing young people for effective and successful participation in college, careers, and civic life. All students entering high school since the 2013-2014 school year must pass the Government HSA as a graduation requirement.

### **Promotion/Retention Procedures Grades 1 through 5**

Determination of "passing" or "failing" from one grade to the next, for all levels through the fifth grade, shall be determined by the principal after consultation with the teacher and with the advice of other individuals (supervisors, counselors, or parents) as are appropriate to the situation.

In general, a student is promoted if this seems best for him/her, based upon the student's total personal and educational development and the likelihood of success at the next grade level.

### **Grades 6 through 8 (Middle School)**

Parents will be notified if a student has a final grade of "E" in two or more academic subjects and is being considered for retention. A committee comprised of school administration, counselors and teachers will be used when making the decision to retain a child, but the final decision to retain a student will be made by the middle school principal. The principal will have reviewed all pertinent information available about the student prior to

making his/her decision. Factors contributing to the total development of a student shall be considered before retention or assignment is determined.

Some students may be offered the opportunity to satisfactorily complete coursework during the summer months as an alternative to repeating a grade. Being offered the opportunity to satisfactorily complete coursework during the summer will be contingent upon the availability of a summer school program, the number of failing grades earned by the student and the courses that are offered during summer school.

A student being retained should be assigned to a different teacher(s) for the year of retention, if possible given the staffing of the school building.

### **Testing Opportunities and Testing Requirements**

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) – Dorchester County Public Schools has elected to complete a census administration for the KRA. During the fall of each year, Kindergarten teachers will complete the KRA for each student. The KRA allows teachers to measure each child's school readiness in a number of developmental domains. The KRA features several types of items including guided recorded observation, performance tasks, and selected response items. The behaviors and skills on the assessment are considered to be developmentally appropriate for most children and the assessment takes place over a period of time. The assessment helps teachers monitor what children know and can do, and is used to plan learning experiences throughout the year.

American College Testing (ACT) – Assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work; the tests cover four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning.

Advanced Placement (AP) Tests – Provides students earning a "qualifying" grade on one or more AP tests the opportunity to be awarded credit or advanced placement by thousands of colleges worldwide.

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) – The ASVAB is a multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military.

College Board Accuplacer – Accuplacer is a suite of computerized tests that assess reading, writing, math and computer skills. Test results help students to identify the college courses for which they have the best opportunity for success.

High School Assessments (HSA) – "End of Course" tests that assess both school performance and individual student performance in the area of government.

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) states have developed a range of assessments to measure student achievement in English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics. These assessments are aligned to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards for grades 3-8, Algebra I, English 10, English 11, and Geometry.

The Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) – The MISA assesses students' understanding of the Next Generation Science Standards. Students in grades 5, 8, and 10 will take the MISA Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT) – Measures verbal reasoning skills, critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skill and provides first-hand practice for the SAT I: Reasoning Test and Sat II: Writing Test. Scores are used to qualify students for National Merit Scholarship Corporations' (NMSC) scholarship programs.

### PSAT and SAT by College Board

The SAT and PSAT focus on content in which students learn in the classroom. They have eight relevant works in context, command of evidence, essay analyzing a source, focus on math that matters most, problems grounded in real-contexts, analysis in science and in History/Social Studies and founding documents and great global conversations.

The PSAT exam will be administered for 10th grade students in the Fall of 2015 and the new SAT exam will be administered in the Spring of 2016. Please make sure you visit your school counseling department for more information on registration information and/or to determine if you qualify for a waiver. Also, please visit [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for more information.

Alternate Assessments - Assessments designed for students in grades 3 through 8, 10 and 11 with significant cognitive disabilities that assess reading, math and science. A student is eligible to participate in these assessments if through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, it has been determined that they cannot participate in the PARCC, MSA or HSA, even with accommodations.

### **Summer School - Review Credit Program**

The summer school review credit program is a program for students to make up credits and improve basic skills. Summer school programs are offered so that students may meet credit and graduation requirements which were not successfully completed during the regular school year or to make students eligible for promotion to the next grade level.

A middle school student with a final average of "E" in one or two academic subjects may have the failing grade changed and/or be promoted provided he/she attends and successfully completes one of the courses in a summer school program approved by the Dorchester County Board of Education. There is a fee for attending the program.

A high school student with a final average of 40% or more may have the failing grade and/or his/her classification changed provided he/she attends and successfully completes a summer program approved by the Dorchester County Board of Education. There is a fee for attending this program.

Questions regarding summer school should be directed to the school principal or school counselor.

## **Extended Day - Review Credit**

This is an instructional program that is offered after regular school hours to students who have failed a course. Eligible students should contact the school counselor for a registration form.

### **Knowledge and Skills that Graduates of DCPS Will Possess**

#### **Academic Attainment**

- Graduates of Dorchester County Public Schools will be proficient in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Students will have had an opportunity to excel in higher level courses with the rigor necessary for college success and state assessments.
- Our graduates will understand the challenges and the need to be competitive within a modern global economy. Graduates will have had opportunities to develop skills that will make them ready for the workplace and will understand ethical practices related to work.
- Graduates will understand the roles and responsibilities of active citizenship in a free society.
- Graduates will understand the importance of maintaining a healthy physical and emotional life style.
- Knowledge of and exposure to the fine arts while in high school will enhance the experience of our graduates.

#### **Communication Skills**

- Graduates will be effective communicators in written and verbal forms.

#### **Technology Skills**

- Graduates will understand how to use technology and the benefits of technology education in their post-secondary/career paths.

#### **Critical Thinking Skills**

- Graduates will have developed critical thinking skills necessary for success in today's global society.
- Students graduating from DCPS will be able to use problem solving skills and work with others cooperatively.

#### **Principled Behavior and Decision Making**

- Graduates will make decisions using honesty, integrity, humility, and justice.



### **An Appreciation for Community and its Members**

- Graduates will become responsible citizens within their community. Our graduates will treat others in a caring and respectful manner. They will be charitable and compassionate towards members of the community.

### **Value Life-long Learning**

- Students who graduate from Dorchester County Public Schools will value learning throughout their lifetime. They will be inquisitive and imaginative.

### **Strong Work Ethic**

- Our graduates will be motivated to become responsible and productive members of society.

### **High Level of Self-Esteem and Self Worth**

- Graduates of Dorchester County Public Schools will be healthy in mind and body.

### **School Counseling Services**

School counseling services are uniquely positioned in each of our schools as the school professionals best able to guide all students toward career and college readiness. School Counselors interact with teachers, administrators, students and their families each day, coordinating resources from across the school, the district and the community. Our school counselors are leaders and advocates who can profoundly influence students' academic achievement, aspirations, decisions and future plans. "How are students different as a result of what we do?" is the new question school counselors seek to answer as they work with students to develop academic, personal/social, and career and college competencies.

### **Title I - Parent's Right to Know**

As a parent/guardian of a student in a Title I School (Hurlock Elementary, Choptank Elementary, Maple Elementary, and Sandy Hill Elementary), you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers, and requires Dorchester County Public Schools to give you this information in a timely manner once you ask for it. Specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the Maryland State Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the Maryland State Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in the classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher including the field of discipline of the certification or degree.

- Whether any paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if they do, their qualifications.

All Title I schools have written parent involvement plans and encourage all parents to participate in a parent advisory council. Please contact your child's principal for details on how you can participate in your child's education through your school's parent council.